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Research News for the U.S. Travel Industry

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TRAVEL PRINTOUT

US Travel Data Center

November 1988 Volume 17, Number 11

U.S. Travel Reaches Highest Level in 7 Years

During 1987, overall U.S. travel increased 6 percent over 1986, reaching its highest level in seven years, according to the US Travel Data Center's National Travel Survey.

The monthly telephone survey, now in its 10th year, reported Americans took 1.19 billion person-trips in 1987, surpassing the record set in 1981. (A person-trip is one person traveling 100 miles or more away from home.)

These estimates and other measures of travel are contained in two new Data Center reports: a brief summary of 1987 travel activity, the 1987 Travel Executive Briefing: A National Travel Survey Summary, accompanied by the 1987 Travel Market Close-Up: National Travel Survey Tabulations.

Says Data Center Director, Dr. Suzanne Cook, "Relatively stable travel prices, strong consumer spending patterns and employment growth have combined to create a favorable environment for Americans who travel."

According to the report, business travel increased 13 percent over year-earlier levels and accounted for one-quarter of all travel in 1987. Moreover, travel for pleasure, the motive behind 76 percent of all trips, increased 5 percent, while weekend travel rose 9 percent over 1986.

In 1987, hotel stays of one or more nights increased 14 percent as the number of trips including hotel visits surpassed the 300 million mark for the first time in five years.

U.S. air travel soared to a 7 percent increase due in part to stabilizing air fares. Auto travel, also rising 7 percent, captured three-fourths of total travel compared to 20 percent for air.

The South-Atlantic census region attracted the most U.S. travelers in 1987 (20 percent), followed by the Pacific region (15 percent) and the East North Central region (12 percent).

The 1987 Travel Executive Briefing and Market-Close-up are based on interviews with 1,500 U.S. residents each month in 1987. The reports are available for $135 each, prepaid, or $250 for both from the US Travel Data Center, 1133 21st Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. ##

Discover America Through the Year 2000

Discover America 2000, a report commissioned by the Discover America Implementation Task Force, addresses what effects the changing demographic structure of the U.S. population will have on the travel industry by the beginning of the next century. The US Travel Data Center compiled and synthesized a comprehensive array of demographic statistics, consumer survey results, observations of a number of social analysts and futurists, as well as the opinions of a variety of tourism professionals who participated in the study.

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Reduced Lodging Prices Lead September Travel Cost Decline

Declines in lodging and motor fuel costs led the 1.4 percent decrease in the cost of travel during September, according to the US Travel Data Center's Travel Price Index (TPI).

The TPI, which measures changes in the seasonally unadjusted prices of lodging, food, transportation and other goods and services purchased by Americans traveling away from home in the United States, dropped to 120.6 (1982-84=100) in September.

For comparison, overall consumer goods and services costs, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose 0.7 percent during the same time.

Lodging prices fell 5 percent in September, the largest drop in the cost of lodging while out of town since June of 1984. Motor fuel costs declined by 1.2 percent, while entertainment costs dipped 0.2 percent in the monthly comparison.

The September TPI gained 3.1 percent over September 1987, while the CPI rose 4.2 percent during the same period. ##

August Vacation Travel Rises 8 Percent

Overall travel during August showed little change; however, vacation travel increased 8 percent, according to the latest National Travel Survey.

The monthly telephone survey shows that Americans took 152.4 million person-trips during August. (A person-trip is one person traveling 100 miles or more away from home.)

Travel for business/convention purposes fell 16 percent from August 1987 levels, while weekend travel decreased 6 percent.

Travel by air increased 6 percent and auto travel rose 4 percent to 123.3 million person-trips. Hotel use fell 2 percent.

Average trip duration in August dipped to 4.5 nights, down from 4.9 nights in 1987. Average distance rose to 970 miles, up from 840 miles last August. ##

Monthly and Annual Rates of Change in the Travel Price Index and Components

September 1988 TPI Component	Monthly Percent Change August 1988 to September 1988	Annual Percent Change September 1987 to September 1988
Transportation	-0.5	-0.2
Airline Fares	0.4	0.6
Other Intercity Trans.	0.1	5.2
Intracity Public Trans.	0.0	2.5
Motor Fuel	-1.2	-1.1
Lodging	-5.0	3.5
Food and Beverages Away From Home	0.4	4.3
Entertainment	-0.2	4.2
TRAVEL PRICE INDEX	-1.4	3.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	0.7	4.2

Source: US Travel Data Center and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

TRAVEL PRINTOUT is published monthly by the US Travel Data Center, the national non-profit center for travel and tourism research, and an affiliate of Travel Industry Association of America, Two Lafayette Centre, 1133 21st Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone: 202/293-1040. Suzanne D. Cook, Director. Ida Simmons, Editor. Julie Bowers, Assistant Editor.

Travel Printout reports on Data Center Projects, national travel research conducted by other respected organizations, and trends in the U.S. travel industry. Subscriptions are $70 per year, U.S., Canada and Mexico; other foreign countries, $80 per year, payable in U.S. funds only. ISSN: 0744-6233.

Travel Industry (from page 1)

The report is organized around seven generational groups now living in American society, from those born in 1977-88 (Baby Boomlets) to those born 1923 and earlier (World War I Babies). While data are presented describing each group today and in the year 2000, the report is not a forecast, but rather a set of logical extrapolations.

Discover America Key Implications

* Early Baby Boomers (born 1946-54), will reach the peak of their earning potential, and, because of the social environment in which they were raised, the less traditional vacation destination will hold great appeal.
* World War II Babies (born 1935-45) could be a good market for off-season travel, as well as group tours, cruises and recreation vehicle travel. While healthy and affluent, their upbringing could steer them to opportunities for social interaction and learning as part of their travel experience.
* World War I Babies offer the industry its first glimpse of what the year 2010 and beyond will resemble, when seniors will dominate the society much more than in the past.

By the year 2000, the U.S. will be wealthier, probably healthier and even more pluralistic than it is today. Slower population growth and intense competition for the consumer's attention will produce many challenges for our nation's travel industry.

To reserve your copy of the Discover America 2000 Report, contact the Travel Industry Association's marketing department at 202/293-1433. ##

Mark Your Calendar

Plan to attend the third annual Travel Review Conference, an important one day review of the past year's travel activity, designed to aid travel marketing and research managerial decision-making for 1989, on February 23, 1989, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C. For more information call 801/581-3351. ##

Visitor Volume at National Parks

Region	AUGUST 1988 visits	Change from AUGUST 1987* (percent)	Percent change 1988/1987* Year-to-Date
NEW ENGLAND	2,616,980	4	0
MIDDLE ATLANTIC	3,897,351	-31	-17
SOUTH ATLANTIC	11,252,690	-11	11
EAST SOUTH CENTRAL	2,728,423	14	11
EAST NORTH CENTRAL	1,154,932	8	14
WEST NORTH CENTRAL	1,949,397	-2	3
WEST SOUTH CENTRAL	1,043,973	2	3
MOUNTAIN	6,746,915	-	3
PACIFIC	7,408,924	-1	1
TOTAL	38,799,585	-7	3

* Percent change figures may not be consistent with those previously reported due to National Park Service revisions.

States comprising the Census regions:
New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont. **Middle Atlantic:** New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania. **South Atlantic:** Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia. **East South Central:** Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee. **East North Central:** Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin. **West North Central:** Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota. **West South Central:** Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas. **Mountain:** Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming. **Pacific:** Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington.

Current Travel Indicators

CURRENT TRAVEL INDICATORS

	Current Month	Current Value	Percent Change: Previous Month	Percent Change: Year-ago Month	Percent Change: Year to date
Establishment receipts or retail sales					
Hotels, motels and other lodging places(1)	Aug	$ 4,855 million	2.9	10.1	9.0
Eating and drinking places(2)	Aug	$13,122 million	0.5	6.8	4.7
Gasoline service stations(2)	Aug	$ 9,111 million	1.8	1.9	5.0
Commercial lodging demand					
Hotel/motel occupancy rate(3)	Aug	62.6 percent	-0.3	1.3	0.9
Real demand for commercial lodging(4)	Aug	64.8 million	2.9	5.1	4.6
Airline passenger traffic(5)					
Domestic revenue passenger-miles	Aug	31.3 billion	5.7	1.7	-0.3
International revenue passenger-miles	Aug	10.6 billion	4.0	11.0	17.9
Highway traffic volume(6)					
Rural arterial vehicle-miles	Aug	48.6 billion	0.5	4.0	4.9
Rail passenger traffic(7)					
Amtrak passenger-miles	Aug *	588.3 million	-0.3	-0.1	9.1
Travel Price Index(8)	Aug	122.3	0.8	4.0	4.3
U.S. resident travel					
Total person-trips (9)	Aug	152.4 million	0.3	0.1	3.8
Vacation person-trips (9)	Aug	112.9 million	-4.8	8.1	8.9
Total person-nights (10)	Aug	686.6 million	-14.8	-5.4	-3.7
Vacation person-nights (10)	Aug	596.1 million	-12.3	3.4	-1.1
Public use of national parks(11)					
Visits	Aug	38,799,585	-7.5	-7.0	3.0
Overnight stays	Aug	3,178,556	-3.5	-7.0	-1.0
Foreign arrivals in U.S.					
From overseas (12)	Jul	1,577,944	38.4	23.0	22.1
From Canada (13)	Aug	1,913,376	-0.5	6.4	9.5
From Mexico (12)	Jul	151,398	82.5	12.5	8.9
U.S. citizen departures					
To overseas (12)	Jun*	1,505,650	29.1	10.5	5.6
To Canada (13)	Aug	2,196,532	-10.4	-5.2	-0.6
Domestic demand for motor gasoline(14)					
Barrels per day	Aug	7,511 thousand	0.5	2.7	1.9

* July data not yet available

(1) Source: Smith Travel Research, seasonally unadjusted. (2) Preliminary; revised monthly. Source: Bureau of the Census. (3) Source: Smith Travel Research, seasonally adjusted, 1986 and 1987 data have been revised. (4) Smith Travel Research, unadjusted room nights sold. (5) Preliminary; U.S. scheduled service air carriers. Source: Air Transport Association. (6) Preliminary; revised monthly. Source: Federal Highway Administration. (7) Source: National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak). (8) Source: US Travel Data Center and Bureau of Labor Statistics. (9) Source: US Travel Data Center. (10) US Travel Data Center. Data is not comparable to earlier published numbers due to revised methodology. (11) Preliminary; unadjusted for differences in reporting units. Source: National Park Service. (12) Source: U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration. Mexican data reflect I94 arrivals only. (13) Statistics Canada (14) Preliminary; Source: U.S. Department of Energy.

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